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## **Jury Finds Cave Creek Man Guilty of Theft, Arson**

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Jan. 30, 2008) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced that Raymond Merolle, Jr., 42, of Cave Creek, was found guilty by a Maricopa County Superior Court jury of two counts of theft and one count of arson. The jury returned the verdict late Tuesday afternoon.

Merolle participated in a criminal organization responsible for the theft of a 38-foot cigarette boat and high-dollar recreational vehicles valued at more than \$400,000. The arson charge related to a car that was set on fire in a desert wash at 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Union Hills in Glendale. The vehicle belonged to Merolle's ex-girlfriend.

Merolle has multiple prior convictions for possession of stolen property in New York and New Jersey. He was taken into custody after the verdict was read and will be sentenced on March 3. He faces up to 18.5 years in prison.

This conviction is the result of an investigation conducted by the Arizona Department of Insurance Fraud Unit, the Chandler Police Department and the Glendale Police Department. Assistant Attorney General Gail Thackeray prosecuted this case.

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